

Ready or Not?

Repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”

*Lt Col Julie C. Boitt, USAF**

I will end “don’t ask, don’t tell.”

—Pres. Barack Obama

Throughout his presidential campaign and again as recently as the 2010 State of the Union address, Pres. Barack Obama reinforced his commitment to lift the ban on homosexuals serving openly in the US military.¹ Although he cannot lift the ban on his own—only the legislative branch has that authority—the president’s clear stance and the Democratic Party’s majority in Congress point to a repeal of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) policy in the nearer term. In fact, a bill has already been introduced, and some Democrats in Congress are posturing to include a repeal in their versions of the defense authorization bill this year.² Moreover, in congressional testimony, Adm Michael G. Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), stated that it was his “personal belief that allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly would be the right thing to do.”³ These facts make a repeal of DADT more likely than not—therefore, the Department of Defense (DOD) should begin preparing now to manage prospective impacts to its forces.

The US military, with its ban on the open display of homosexuality, stands with 11 other countries, but this list does not include countries where homosexuality is “banned outright, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and several other nations in the Middle East.”⁴ However, other key allies, including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Israel, have already lifted the ban on homosexuals serving in their militaries. In fact, 24 foreign militaries now have no ban on gay service members, and many of these allies provide critical support to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.⁵ These “combat-tested fighting forces” are “critical partners in the American defense strategy” and can provide insight to the United States as it prepares for its own policy change regarding homosexuals.⁶

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This paper briefly discusses the history and current policy under DADT and outlines proposed legislation currently in the US House of Representatives. Given the likelihood of repeal sooner rather than later, this paper then focuses on specific policy implementation recommendations for the DOD—and who should be involved. This paper does not argue the “rightness” or “wrongness” of any alteration to DADT. It does, however, show that to successfully execute the potential new law in the US military work environment, the DOD must involve key stakeholders and take multiple actions *now* to mitigate potential impacts. Such steps include being proactive, emphasizing professional conduct, top-down implementation, training and education, and consideration of manpower, facility, and other internal policy concerns.

Recent History and the Current Law

Those serving in the US military in the early 1990s remember the charged political debates and presidential campaign promises of Gov. Bill Clinton that eventually led to 10 *United States Code* 654, *Policy Concerning Homosexuality in the Armed Forces*, commonly known as DADT. While Clinton promised to lift the ban entirely, §654, enacted in 1993, was essentially a compromise based on fierce resistance by influential congressional members and senior US military officers.⁷ In the law, Congress reasserted its unique discretion to “establish qualifications for and conditions of service in the Armed Forces,” reaffirmed the “prohibition against homosexual conduct,” and reemphasized its authority to “regulate a [service] member’s life for 24 hours each day.”⁸

Basically, the law allows a homosexual to serve in the armed forces as long as that person does not engage (or intend to engage) in homosexual conduct, which includes homosexual acts, statements, marriage (or attempted marriage) to a person known to be of the same biological sex.⁹ Since implementation, from fiscal years 1994 through 2009, 13,167 service members have been discharged from the US military under §654.¹⁰ This paper uses DADT and the general term *policy* to refer to restrictions against open homosexuals in accordance with the 1993 statute, as well as the accompanying US government policy and implementing directives.

Proposed Legislation

The Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2009, introduced in the House of Representatives and in subcommittee in March 2009, proposes to repeal the current law and the DOD policy concerning

homosexuality. As written, it “prohibits the Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of Homeland Security with respect to the Coast Guard when it is not operating as a service in the Navy, from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation against any member of the Armed Forces or any person seeking to become a member.”¹¹ The proposed legislation also “authorizes the re-accession into the Armed Forces of otherwise qualified individuals previously separated for homosexuality, bisexuality, or homosexual conduct.”¹² The secretaries may also “not establish, implement, or apply any personnel or administrative policy, or take any personnel or administrative action (including any policy or action relating to promotions, demotions, evaluations, selections for awards, selections for duty assignments, transfers, or separations) in whole or in part on the basis of sexual orientation.”¹³ A similarly worded and entitled bill was also introduced in the Senate, and it is currently in committee as of March 2010.¹⁴

Note that since repeal could affect family member benefits, section 5 of each bill states “[n]othing in this act . . . shall be construed to require the furnishing of dependent benefits in violation of section 7 of title 1, U.S. Code (relating to the definitions of ‘marriage’ and ‘spouse’ and referred to as the ‘Defense of Marriage Act’).”¹⁵ Unless changed, the federal definition of marriage will continue to be a “legal union between a man and a woman” and a spouse still “refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife.”¹⁶ In other words, unless the Defense of Marriage Act is altered or the proposed DADT repeal legislation is amended, spousal and dependent benefits should not be an *immediate* issue for the DOD.

Working the Interfaces—Who Should Be Involved?

Having people from all levels involved brings in multiple perspectives, identifies unexpected problems, and can generate innovative ideas and solutions.

—Wayne Turk
“Be Willing to Make Changes”

Repealing DADT must involve numerous stakeholders to ensure effective implementation and full consideration of unintended consequences. Participative involvement from all levels can also create buy-in and help “overcome resistance and make changes succeed.”¹⁷ To determine who should be involved, figure 1 provides a proposed interest map for the DOD’s use as it prepares for repeal.

Steven Cohen’s interest map concept can be useful to visualize the different agencies with an interest in the outcome.¹⁸ For example, the



Figure 1. Implementing the repeal of “don’t ask, don’t tell” interest map. (Created by the author.)

primary stakeholders clearly have an interest if DADT is repealed, as they will be the primary implementers. The constituents, such as military members and agencies within the DOD, have a direct relationship and will be directly affected by the implementation plan approved by the department. Other interested parties (OIP) may or may not have a direct relationship with the DOD, but OIPs certainly have interests in the outcome—and might make decisions or take action based on that outcome. As Cohen suggests, these stakeholders’ interests may appear remote. However, “If we ignore them . . . they may come back to haunt us when we are least expecting it.”¹⁹ Moreover, note the overlapping interests, multiple ties, and connections among *all* of the parties on the map, even though these connections are not shown in the graphic.

To illustrate the recommended thought process, note that OIPs include the American public, the media, and US allies. Making a concerted effort to reach out and communicate strategically with the American public through the media before, during, and after implementation can go a long way towards ensuring transparency and maintaining public trust. Strategic communication should also target US allies, especially since many of them no longer have a ban on openly

serving homosexuals. Coalition partners must understand the change and the DOD's efforts to smoothly implement the repeal. In fact, many allies can offer potential "lessons learned" from their personnel policies, as will be discussed later. The key is to engage the right internal *and* external organizations from the start and to realize that others outside the US military are also impacted by a repeal of the DADT policy.

Policy Implementation Recommendations

If elected officials change the military's homosexual policy, the DOD must appropriately implement and adhere to the new law to minimize negative impacts to its forces. Armed with the background and proposed legislation above, several recommendations, outlined in figure 2, should assist the DOD in executing the new law's details.

Recommendations for DOD	
1. Be Proactive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consult Foreign Militaries – Review prior DOD integration efforts
2. Emphasize Professional Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Create "code of professional conduct"
3. Top-Down Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Message must come from DOD senior leadership
4. Training & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Not sensitivity training, but education on new law/standards
5. Manpower Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Temporary augmentation of Equal Opportunity (EO), Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC), Chaplaincy, & Medical Corps – Posture for reinstatement of formerly discharged members – Prepare for potential "mass exodus" (senior officer/NCO leaders)
6. Facility Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consider, but be wary of special treatment/benefits
7. Other Internal Policy Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Revision of directives, regulations, <i>Uniform Code of Military Justice</i> (UCMJ), and personnel policies – Posture for potential litigation
8. Immediate Implementation (versus Gradual Change)	

Figure 2. Implementing repeal of DADT—recommendations for the DOD. (Created by the author.)

Be Proactive

The DOD must be proactive and act now to involve such key players as those recommended in figure 1. The initial intent is to begin the dialogue among the stakeholders to determine what *they* think the issues will be and follow their suggestions by establishing specific action plans to deal with those issues. While the DOD may be concerned that leaning too far forward would signal acceptance or desire for the change, it may find that waiting until the change occurs risks failure—and is inconsistent with the military culture of planning ahead.

Part of a proactive approach should include consultations with allies who have lifted their bans to garner lessons learned. While such nations as Canada, Israel, Britain, and Australia did not experience the difficulties initially anticipated²⁰—and for Britain and Australia, lifting the ban was an “absolute non-event”²¹—there are still insights to be gained. Perhaps by consulting with Britain, for example, the United States can ascertain how none of the fears about “harassment, discord, blackmail, bullying or an erosion of unit cohesion or military effectiveness” materialized for its all-volunteer force.²² Despite size and cultural differences, an opportunity exists to extrapolate from allied experiences what might happen for the United States.

Regardless of these insights, the American military should still expect internal resistance; attitudes, social norms, and religious beliefs differ in the United States. For example, US military concerns regarding service of open homosexuals include undermining of unit cohesion, violence or abuse towards gays, violation of religious and moral beliefs, lack of respect for homosexual leaders, and the sharing of close quarters (such as foxholes, latrines, and operational spaces) between heterosexuals and open homosexuals.²³

A 2009 survey of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans with specific questions about the concerns listed above suggests that “the strong support for the policy when it was created [in 1993] has shifted somewhat toward the direction of uncertainty or opposition,” indicating *less* internal resistance to a repeal.²⁴ Furthermore, the ratings indicated that the quality of leaders, equipment, and training is the critical factor associated with unit cohesion and readiness.²⁵ This is relevant since concerns about unit cohesion and readiness are the most cited reasons for opposition to any repeal of the gay ban.²⁶ Despite this, some current military members might view any change to the current policy as “coercive interference in their way of life.”²⁷ Therefore, the United States must prepare for this if the law changes.

Finally, while this change may not exactly mirror previous integration efforts in the US military, the DOD should still consult lessons

learned surrounding integration of African Americans and women for use during this effort. Consulting historical lessons can provide an essential base of knowledge leading to a successful transition. At a minimum, these experiences can provide insights into the military's adaptability to change. As RAND stated, "Experience shows that it is possible to change how troops behave towards previously excluded (and despised) minority groups, even if underlying attitudes towards these groups change very little."²⁸

Emphasis on Professional Conduct

Gay service personnel know that they have the code of conduct to back them up in the event of harassment or bullying. And all servicemembers know that they have recourse to complain if they witness inappropriate comments or actions.

—Aaron Belkin and R. L. Evans
*The Effects of Including Gay and Lesbian
Soldiers in the British Armed Forces*

One successful implementation strategy used in the United Kingdom's transition in 2000 was the establishment of a code of social conduct modeled after the Australian armed forces.²⁹ The code, referenced in the quote above, places the focus on professional conduct and behavior for *all*, regardless of sexual orientation. Homosexuals and heterosexuals are "prohibited from engaging in social behavior that undermines, or may potentially undermine the trust, cohesion, and therefore the operational effectiveness, of the Services."³⁰ Existing policies, such as "zero tolerance for harassment, discrimination and bullying," complemented the code, which enumerated inappropriate behavior that included unwelcome physical or verbal sexual attention, displaying affection which might cause offense to others, and taking sexual advantage of subordinates.³¹ The key was the code avoided dealing with attitudes and beliefs that are often difficult to change. Instead, it addressed behavior, which can be more directly influenced.

Using such a code tailored for the United States may work. If the DOD adopts this approach, the first step would be to create a guiding coalition of senior leadership across the DOD with enough power and vision to lead the change.³² The second step would be to involve such key stakeholders as those illustrated in figure 1 to create a similar code that would apply to all US service members. The new conduct code should also be as *simple* as possible to enhance understanding.

Additionally, the stakeholder team should specifically address public displays of affection (PDA), since challenges in implementation may occur if heterosexuals and homosexuals have different standards in this regard. The team developing the code must realize that if PDA for a heterosexual couple is acceptable, the same standard should apply to homosexuals. In sum, an emphasis on professional conduct will be critical to successful implementation—and long-term adherence—to the proposed law.

Top-Down Implementation

It must be clear to the troops that behavioral dissent from the policy will not be tolerated.

—RAND Research Brief RB-7537, 2000

To effectively implement the DADT repeal, DOD officials must issue a consistent message from the top. DOD-wide talking points and senior leadership support and training must be central to this policy conversion. In addition to the message within the quote above, DOD guidance should include reminders that the US military is subject to civilian authority and that the DOD must make the change successful.

At all levels, commanders and their senior enlisted leaders must be the messengers, leading from the front rather than using the equal opportunity (EO) or sexual assault response coordinator (SARC) offices to deliver the news. Because the military is already under significant stress in Iraq and Afghanistan, leaders must also send messages of reassurance to the force, “convey[ing] that this policy is not a challenge to traditional military values.”³³ While potentially difficult to execute (depending on the personal views of each leader), the policy, coming directly from senior levels, can set the tone for a positive transition across the services.³⁴

Training and Education

Any enterprise-wide change requires training and education to ensure the initial roll out is implemented appropriately and to ensure the message is reinforced as new members enter. This change will be no exception. Using the code of conduct and talking points described earlier provide a great start. However, the training should *not* resemble sensitivity training, as has been suggested by other recent articles.³⁵ As RAND advises, “[E]mphasis should be placed on conduct, not on teaching tolerance or sensitivity. For those who believe that homo-

sexuality is primarily a moral issue, efforts to teach tolerance would simply breed more resentment.”³⁶

Instead, the focus should center on establishing “clear norms that sexual orientation is irrelevant to performing one’s duty and that everyone should be judged on his or her own merits.”³⁷ Moreover, training should emphasize “all sexual harassment is unacceptable regardless of the genders or sexual orientations of the individuals involved.”³⁸ Furthermore, training should include other specific guidelines—such as Britain’s implementation guidance that advised “a person’s sexual orientation is to be considered a private matter, and every servicemember has a right to personal privacy”—reminding personnel to “[r]espect that right, and do not try to make their private business your concern.”³⁹ Educational efforts should also include clear direction and a focus on professional conduct by all. Finally, in anticipation of potential violence against known homosexuals in the military, training should emphasize that perpetrators of violence of any kind will be punished quickly and appropriately. In sum, training and education must clearly (and simply) communicate the new policy’s expectations and explain what it means to each military member, focusing on characteristics that unite, rather than what separates.

Manpower Considerations

Although our allies did not experience great difficulties within their militaries and data from a 2006 survey of US, Iraq, and Afghanistan war veterans shows “declining support” for the homosexual ban, it is still prudent to plan for internal resistance.⁴⁰ To this end, the DOD should consider several resource issues. For example, the DOD’s EO and SARC programs may require augmentation to deal with the potential increase in sexual harassment and EO-related complaints resulting from homosexuals serving openly. While homosexual-related complaints occur now, it is realistic to anticipate a temporary increase once the threat of involuntary discharge is lifted. As an integral part of change implementation, these organizations can appropriately deal with any lapses in performance by service members (both homosexual and heterosexual), and these functions can also provide critical commander support if adequately staffed.

Furthermore, such support agencies as the chaplaincy and medical community could require help depending on the reaction of the force. Although the DOD approach should emphasize behavioral issues, this topic has spiritual and moral implications that need consideration. In terms of religious counseling, even though a chaplain “would not be required to preach something that he did not believe as a part

of remaining in the chaplaincy, this community could face significant challenges as it seeks to minister to members of the force.”⁴¹ Additionally, frequency of homosexual-related medical issues may cause an uptick in readiness challenges if homosexual conduct is no longer prohibited. While HIV testing is already a part of medical screening for service members, a new nondiscriminatory homosexual policy could still have a negative impact. In response, additional screening, targeted medical care, and additional HIV medications may be required—and the medical community should be manned accordingly.

Another important issue deals with reinstatement of individuals previously discharged under the current DADT law, particularly since the proposed house bill calls for “re-accession of otherwise qualified persons.”⁴² Given this, the services should examine homosexual discharge cases since 1993 and begin determining personnel procedures for reinstatement immediately. The services should also begin collecting data regarding career fields in which these individuals served and begin formulating where and how they can be utilized to benefit both the service and the returning service member. The DOD should note that Britain successfully invited, integrated, and reaccessed previously separated members. After ensuring the individual’s qualifications, security clearance, and fitness for duty, the candidate was reinstated in fields where military personnel were needed. In addition, on-the-job or other training programs were used to establish job currency.⁴³

Finally, the DOD cannot ignore the possibility of a “mass exodus”—or at least a significant number of currently serving personnel deciding to separate or retire early because of the policy change. Other foreign militaries expected it based on vocal resistance before implementation. Even though it did not materialize, the United States could certainly be different, particularly in the higher ranks of its military. In fact, 1,152 retired flag and general officers have communicated concerns regarding DADT repeal, which could indicate significant resistance in *current* leadership as well.⁴⁴ To manage this risk, DOD leaders must communicate with the entire force early and often and reiterate such themes as fair and equitable standards for all and DOD-wide expectations for professional conduct. Focusing on leadership support at the intermediate level and what it means to them professionally is also important, for the “next layer of leaders, those who actually must implement the new rules, [must] come to identify their enforcement of the new policy *with their own self-interest* as institutional leaders” (emphasis added).⁴⁵ Interestingly, in addition to a concerted effort by military leadership to prevent any mass exodus, the presently weakened economy may actually be an asset in dealing with the repeal of the DADT policy. Even though RAND warned of

negative impacts on recruiting and retention, it is realistic to predict current economic concerns could mitigate those effects, not to mention those who *do* resign or choose not to reenlist are more easily replaced during record enlistment resulting from the new post-9/11 Government Issue bill, a steady paycheck, training, and other benefits.⁴⁶ Moreover, those retained will likely adhere to the new rules rather than risk discharge or disciplinary action, particularly given the fear of unemployment in the currently challenging job market.

However, a potential still exists that members may depart because their belief system will not allow them to adjust to the new policy, or they may depart to make a statement. The DOD should be prepared for this possibility, but such departures should not change an approach that incorporates an emphasis on professional conduct.

Facility Considerations

Another resource consideration mentioned in other literature stated that “dorm and facility upgrades would be needed.”⁴⁷ While such upgrades would certainly be worth *considering*, since the most common concern for heterosexuals is related to sharing with homosexuals such accommodations as showers, bathrooms, and dormitories, the significant monetary costs and potential fairness concerns make it critical to look carefully at all sides.⁴⁸

For example, note that the United Kingdom chose *not* to make any facility adaptations to accommodate homosexuals and that the negative reaction was only short term.⁴⁹ Additionally, in Israel, rather than alter facilities, “gay soldiers are assigned to open bases, allowing them to commute to and from home and sleep at their own homes rather than in barracks.”⁵⁰

In this regard, the US military must be particularly wary of special treatment—if homosexuals receive better facilities or special accommodations, it would only exacerbate potentially contentious integration issues and undermine cohesion and morale. Moreover, creating separate facilities or special quarters policies for homosexuals would theoretically require homosexuals to declare their orientation—a concept directly contrary to the proposed law’s intent. In addition to cautions about special treatment, one could argue that current US military facilities are already adequate. With the exception of Navy ships and some Marine Corps bases, most enlisted dormitories are at (or projected for) the “1+1 standard,” which includes separate living quarters with a shared bathroom and kitchen.⁵¹ Also, most locations, even in Iraq and Afghanistan, already use such privacy measures as stalls to separate common-use showers and bathrooms.

Lastly, it is accepted as factual that *homosexuals already serve in today's armed forces* and that there are no issues with the facilities currently available. Nor is there “valid scientific evidence to indicate that gay men and lesbians are less able than heterosexuals to control their sexual or romantic urges” or that “acknowledged homosexuals very seldom challenge the norms and customs of their organizations.”⁵² Given this, if facilities are not an issue now, they should not be after the ban is lifted. However, if just *knowing* someone is homosexual, or if the real issue is that heterosexuals simply do not like or are threatened by homosexuals, perhaps the right way to deal with such discomfort or any resulting inappropriate behavior is through sexual harassment or educational channels and the chain of command. Within such channels, it remains an issue of professional behavior, not special accommodation.

In summary, good order and discipline, ensured through leadership, are what will make the transition work—much more than walls and stalls. Consequently, repeal of the DADT policy should not necessarily require special facilities accommodations—particularly given the enormous costs—but the DOD should look closely to consider all sides of the argument.

Internal Process Changes and Other Policy Considerations

Upon the ban's repeal, the DOD's most obvious internal tasks are to rewrite or adjust directives, instructions, and regulations and task subordinate services to do the same. In fact, proposed legislation already includes a blanket statement to this effect: “Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall revise Department of Defense regulations” and each military department must revise its regulations “not later than 180 days after the date of enactment.”⁵³ This relatively short timeline makes it prudent for the DOD to take stock of documents requiring edits now—while the repeal is being debated. This easy step enables a timely plan of action.

Note that the proposed bill does *not* address a revision of the punitive articles of the *Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)*. The congressionally mandated *UCMJ* requires the president to implement the *UCMJ*. The president does this through an executive order known as the Manual for Courts Martial. If Congress passes the DADT repeal bill, it follows that Article 125 (“Sodomy”), Article 133 (“Conduct Unbecoming an Officer and Gentleman”), and Article 134–4 (“General Article–Assault”) would need to be aligned with the new law, since

arguably these articles could no longer be legitimately enforced under a homosexual antidiscrimination policy.

Another internal consideration is to prepare for possible lawsuits from separated homosexual service members. An increase in litigation is especially realistic if the DOD continues to discharge military members while the DADT policy is under review. Interestingly, the British Ministry of Defence discharged its last homosexual three days before lifting of its ban in 2000, resulting in additional negative press and litigation.⁵⁴ Thus, the United States should consider immediately whether to place on hold current discharge cases to preclude issues after repeal.

In addition to the considerations above, a broad range of personnel policies must be reviewed in the wake of the DADT policy repeal to determine if any other policies include discriminatory language. For example, service fraternization policies appear to remain relevant in any post-DADT world, with the exception of those paragraphs specifically addressing the current homosexual policy.⁵⁵ However, with regards to assignment policies, while military members could argue that homosexuals should be restricted from serving in certain career fields more likely to experience austere or close-knit living conditions (e.g., infantry, ranger, or Marine units), the proposed bill specifically prohibits any personnel policy, including selections for duty assignments, on the basis of sexual orientation in whole or in part.⁵⁶ Finally, if the proposed bill is altered to include dependent benefits, given that some states allow same-sex marriages, several other recommendations will need to be considered at some point, including medical benefits, insurance, and survivor benefits.⁵⁷ Even though the federal government is not bound by such state laws, repeal could just be a foot in the door and lead to dependent benefits as the next step of legislation. Either way, the DOD should at least consider this possibility, since the monetary and policy impacts would be significant. In sum, the DOD must undertake an enterprise-wide review of its policies to ensure they meet the new law's intent—and consider possible challenges.

Implementation Timeline

I think it's important, as we look to this change, that it be done in a way that doesn't disrupt the force at a time where it's under a lot of stress. And that, to me, means in a measured, deliberate way, over some time—to be determined.

—Adm Michael G. Mullen
Chairman, JCS

While some could argue that a gradual change may be more palatable because of current operations tempo (as the chairman states above) or because military culture does not change quickly and its customs are formed over generations, note that it has already been more than 16 years since the DADT policy was implemented. In other words, in a way, it has already been a gradual change.

Regardless, if the homosexual ban is lifted, the DOD may not have a choice in its implementation. The law may be directive and specific—the proposed bill’s regulation rewrite timelines are a case in point. But even if there is a choice, most change experts recommend establishing a “sense of urgency” as the organization embarks on change and puts together its vision and strategy for implementation.⁵⁸ RAND also recommended immediate rather than gradual implementation as “any sense of experimentation or uncertainty invites those opposed to change to continue to resist it.”⁵⁹ Since military members may feel like their turf is being invaded, leaders at all levels need to understand these concerns and communicate the policy change benefits to heterosexuals too, because it hinges on the professional standard of conduct for all. Still, leaders should *not* expect fundamental attitude changes towards homosexuals (or homosexuality) regardless of the timeline—even well after the change is implemented—but they must insist on an adherence to the new rules and a display of professional behavior from all service members.

Lastly, to ensure implementation is progressing as planned, the DOD must solicit feedback through hotlines, climate surveys, unit assessments, and possibly DOD-hosted conferences to identify and address issues during implementation. The DOD must also closely monitor retention and recruiting trends to determine the policy change’s impact, if any.

Conclusion

Today’s integrated force is the product of many years of effort, constant monitoring, and the sustained commitment of civilian and military leaders.

—RAND Research Brief RB-7537, 2000

The US military is the strongest force in the world, and if required by law, it is capable of integrating homosexuals as other countries have successfully done. The key in implementing a DADT policy repeal will be for the DOD to plan now and smartly implement any change to the existing policy by being proactive, emphasizing profes-

sional conduct, implementing the change with visible support from senior leaders, utilizing robust training and education programs, considering manpower and facility ramifications, and leaning forward to make policy and regulatory changes required by the new law. Doing these things, particularly with a sustained leadership commitment mentioned in the quote above, will help to ensure that US military readiness and cohesion remains intact in the midst of such a significant change. With a repeal of the DADT policy likely in the not-too-distant future, the DOD must be *more* ready than not—the American people and its government expects and deserves nothing less.

Notes

1. Pres. Barack Obama stated, "This year, I will work with Congress and our military to finally repeal the law that denies gay Americans the right to serve the country they love because of who they are." See Pres. Barack Obama, State of the Union Address (White House, Washington, DC, 27 January 2010), <http://stateoftheunionaddress.org> (accessed 28 January 2010).

2. Ed O'Keefe and Paul Kane, "Congressman Vows Repeal Effort in 2010," *Washington Post*, 12 November 2009, 6.

3. JCS Web site, "Testimony Regarding DOD 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Policy," as delivered by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates and Adm Mike Mullen, chairman, JCS, 2 February 2010, <http://www.jcs.mil/speech.aspx?id=1322> (accessed 8 February 2010).

4. Other countries with homosexual bans include Argentina, Belarus, Brazil, Croatia, Greece, Poland, Peru, Portugal, Russia, Turkey, and Venezuela. See Nathaniel Frank, *Unfriendly Fire: How the Gay Ban Undermines the Military and Weakens America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009), 137.

5. *Ibid.*, 137, 158. Other countries without homosexual bans include Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Great Britain, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

6. *Ibid.*, 158.

7. Statements presented by members of Congress indicated resistance. See US House, Committee on Armed Services, *Policy Implications of Lifting the Ban on Homosexuals in the Military*, 103d Cong., 1st sess., May 1993. For information on resistance from the JCS, see Colin Powell, *My American Journey*, ed. Joseph Perisco (New York: Random House, 1995), 556–57.

8. "Policy Concerning Homosexuality in the Armed Forces," *US Code*, Title 10, sec. 654.

9. *Ibid.*

10. JCS Web site, "Testimony Regarding DOD 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Policy"; and Lt Col Greg A. Brown (USAF, Office of the Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness), interview by the author, 13 October 2009.

11. House, *Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2009*, 111th Cong., 1st sess., HR 1283, in *Congressional Record*, 3 March 2009; and Senate, *Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2010*, 111th Cong., 2d sess., S. 3065, in *Congressional Record*, 3 March 2010.

12. House, *Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2009*.

13. Ibid.
14. Senate, Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2010.
15. Ibid.; and House, *Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2009*.
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23. Bonnie Moradi and Laura Miller, "Attitudes of Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans towards Gay and Lesbian Service Members," *Armed Forces and Society*, 29 October 2009, <http://afs.sagepub.com/cgi/rapidpdf/0095327X09352960v1> (accessed 13 December 2009).
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27. Frank, *Unfriendly Fire*, 143.
28. "Changing the Policy toward Homosexuals in the U.S. Military," RAND Research Brief, RB-7537, 2000, http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB7537/index1.html.
29. Aaron Belkin and R. L. Evans, *The Effects of Including Gay and Lesbian Soldiers in the British Armed Forces: Appraising the Evidence* (University of California–Santa Barbara: The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military, 2000), 27, 33.
30. Ibid., 26.
31. Ibid.
32. John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 21.
33. "Changing the Policy toward Homosexuals in the U.S. Military."
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35. See Om Prakash, "The Efficacy of Don't Ask, Don't Tell," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 55 (October–December 2009): 88–94.
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37. House, *Policy Implications of Lifting the Ban on Homosexuals in the Military*, 247.
38. Ibid.
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41. House, *Policy Implications of Lifting the Ban on Homosexuals in the Military*, 170.

42. House, *Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2009*.
43. Jones, interview.
44. "Flag and General Officers for the Military: Supporting the 1993 Law That Protects Morale and Readiness," <http://www.flagandgeneralofficersforthemilitary.com> (accessed 8 February 2010). For example, current Marine Corps commandant, Gen James T. Conway, has been the "most outspoken opponent" of repeal. See Scarborough, "Marine Leads 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Fight."
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53. House, *Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2009*.
54. Brown, interview.
55. *Ibid.*
56. House, *Military Readiness Enhancement Act of 2009*.
57. Massachusetts, Connecticut, California, Iowa, Vermont, and New Hampshire issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples; Rhode Island, New York, and the District of Columbia recognize same-sex marriages from other states; and New Jersey allows civil unions. See National Conference of State Legislatures, "Same Sex Marriage, Civil Unions and Domestic Partnerships," <http://www.ncsl.org/IssuesResearch/HumanServices/SameSexMarriage/tabid/16430/Default.aspx> (accessed 8 February 2010).
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Abbreviations

DADT	“don’t ask, don’t tell”
DOD	Department of Defense
EO	Equal Opportunity
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OIP	other interested party
PDA	public display of affection
SARC	sexual assault response coordinator
UCMJ	<i>Uniform Code of Military Justice</i>